

**Dewent Rural District
COUNCIL.**

**Annual Report on the Health of the
District
for the Year 1925.**

BY

Dr. W. M. LUCAS JOHNSTONE, M.B.

Medical Officer of Health

Newent Rural District.

Annual Report for the Year 1925.

To the Chairman and Members of the Newent Rural District Council.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

I have pleasure in presenting the Annual Report on the Health of the District for the Year 1925, in accordance with the requirements of the Ministry of Health.

GENERAL STATISTICS

Population (Census 1921)	...	...	7597
Estimated Population for 1925	...	...	7605
Number of Inhabited Houses (1921)	...	...	1950
Number of Families or separate Occupiers (1921)	...	...	1950
Rateable Value	...	...	£ 57,997
Sum represented by a penny rate	...	...	£ 241

Physical Features and General Character of the District.

Your District, consisting of 16 Civil Parishes, has an area of about 40,000 acres and is purely Agricultural in character.

With the exception of a Sawing and Planing Mill and a Milk Condensing Factory, both situate in the Town of Newent, no works of any importance are carried on in the District. The majority of the population is dependent upon Agriculture and its allied trades.

Rainfall.

The total rainfall for the year was 27.74 inches

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VITAL STATISTICS.

BIRTHS.

The number of births registered during the year was 137.

		Males.	Females.	Total.
Glos. Portion	Legitimate	67	45	112
	Illegitimate	1	3	4
Worcs. Portion	Legitimate	10	11	21
	Illegitimate	—	—	—

Giving a Birth rate of 18 per thousand.

Previous Birth rates :—	1921	1922	1923	1924
	19.8	21.9	22.1	18.8

The birth rate for England and Wales was 18.3 per thousand.

DEATHS

The number of deaths registered was 90.

		Males.	Females.	Total.
Glos. Portion	...	30	47	77
Worcs. Portion	...	6	7	13

Giving a death rate of 11.68 per thousand.

Previous death rates :—	1921	1922	1923	1924
	12.8	16.8	14.8	15.1

The death rate for England and Wales was 12.2 per thousand.

NATURAL INCREASE

BIRTHS	137
DEATHS	90
	Increase	...	47

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INFANTILE MORTALITY.

		Males.	Females.	Total.
Glos. Portion	Legitimate ..	2	7	9
	Illegitimate ...	1	—	1
Worcs. Portion	Legitimate ...	—	2	2
	Illegitimate	—	—	—

Giving a rate of 87.5 per thousand births.

There were no deaths from Puerperal Sepsis during the year.

One death was attributable to an accident of pregnancy and parturition.

There were 4 deaths from whooping cough and 1 death from diarrhoea (under 2 years of age). Deaths from pneumonia numbered 7 ; from cancer 14 ; heart disease 23.

There have been no noteworthy causes of sickness or invalidity in the District during the past five years ; neither do conditions of occupation nor environment appear to have had any appreciable prejudicial effects upon health.

It is pleasing to note that notwithstanding a fairly extensive epidemic of measles which prevailed towards the end of the year, not one death was registered as due to this disease.

POOR LAW RELIEF.

FOR THE YEAR ENDING 31st MARCH, 1926.

NEWENT UNION.

Average Number			Amount Expended.		
			£	s.	d.
27	Indoor	...	1081	0	0
134	Out Relief	...	2238	0	0
36	Lunatics	...	1625	0	0
19	Boarded Out	...	173	0	0

(4)

GENERAL PROVISION OF HEALTH SERVICES IN THE DISTRICT.

(1) HOSPITALS.

Infectious Cases are removed to Over Hospital, Gloucester, by arrangement with Gloucester City Corporation, who also provided the necessary motor ambulance.

Children are usually treated at the Royal Infirmary and Children's Hospital, Gloucester.

When necessary, arrangements are made for the admission of maternity cases to the District Nursing Home, Gloucester.

Institutional provision for unmarried mothers, illegitimate infants and homeless children at Tewkesbury Union Workhouse.

(2) PUBLIC HEALTH OFFICERS.

Medical Officer of Health .. W. M. LUCAS JOHNSTONE, M.B.

Sanitary Inspector .. }
Inspector of Meat and other Foods .. } Wm. FRANCIS, R. San. Inst.

(3) NURSING.

The District is very well supplied with Nurses. Eight midwives practice in the District and are subsidised partially by grants from the County Organization, District Council, and the local Nursing Association. The latter deserve the utmost praise for their active interest and support.

(4) CLINICAL and BACTERIOLOGICAL WORK.

Water samples are sent to the County Analyst, Gloucester.

Pathological specimens, swabs, sputum, etc., are sent to Bristol University.

The results in each case are very satisfactory.



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SANITARY CIRCUMSTANCES of the DISTRICT.

(1) WATER.

The Town of Newent is supplied for the most part from the Waterworks situate at Oxenhall. The quality is excellent and the supply constant and abundant. Stand-pipes also provide a constant supply for the inhabitants of Bromsberrow Heath and Bran Green. The remainder of your District is chiefly dependent upon wells and springs. These are, in the main, satisfactory and sufficient, with the exception of certain parts of Redmarley, where in several instances, householders have been obliged to carry their drinking water great distances.

During the year 7 new connections were made with the Town Supply, while 7 improved sources of supply were provided. 8 samples were taken for examination and 1 well was closed in consequence.

(2) POLLUTION OF RIVERS AND STREAMS.

No case of River Pollution was discovered during the year.

(3) DRAINAGE AND SEWERAGE.

The Sewage from the Town of Newent is purified by :-

- (a) A pair of Sedimentation Tanks.
- (b) A small Septic Tank.

The filtered effluent is discharged into a small stream near the Tanks. The outfall of the Sewer near Messrs. Cadbury's Milk Condensing Factory gives occasional trouble owing to lack of gradient and a diminution in the diameter of the sewer. The question of relaying this length of sewer has been considered at some length, but was found to be beyond the financial resources of the District at the present time.

(4) CLOSET ACCOMMODATION

Privies with vaults are the type chiefly in use in the greatest part of your District. Every effort is made to secure conversions to Pail Closets where practicable, although considerable opposition to the latter exists among the majority of rural householders. This is in a great measure due to prejudice, but the most commonly raised objection

(6)

is the necessity for greater care and attention in maintaining closets of the pail type in a cleanly state. 25 improved types were provided during the year.

In the Town of Newent there are at present 219 Water-Closets, 44 Pail-closets, and 36 Privies with vaults. During the year 3 Water-closets were substituted for Privies.

(5) SCAVENGING.

House refuse is collected, by contract, twice a week from the town of Newent and deposited on low lying land about a quarter of a mile outside the Town

It is greatly to be regretted that householders and trades people do not burn waste-paper and putrescent garbage, and thus reduce the bulk of their refuse, and, incidentally, assist in making the refuse-dump less objectionable and unsightly

(6) SANITARY INSPECTION of the DISTRICT.

Defects or Nuisances discovered.

These may be classified as follows :-

- (a) Deficiency of Closet accommodation
- (b) Serious structural Defects
- (c) Defective ventilation and light
- (d) Overcrowding
- (e) Lack of water supply
- (f) Filthy conditions due to neglect were occasionally found.

Action and result of action taken :-

In no case were legal proceedings necessary to enforce property owners to comply with the recommendations of the authority.

WORK OF SANITARY INSPECTOR.

Numbers Inspected of the following :-

		No. on Register.	No. Inspected.	Total No. of Inspections.
[a]	Common Lodging Houses	...	1	...
[b]	Slaughter Houses	...	5	...
[c]	Bakehouses	...	10	...
[d]	Dairies, Cowsheds, Milkshops	162	120	120
[e]	Workshops	...	16	...

Work of Sanitary Inspector continued—

Number of Complaints received (written)	17
Number of Nuisances reported to Council	11
Number of Nuisances abated	86
Number of Preliminary Notices served (P.H. Act.)	86
Number of Statutory Notices served (P.H. Act)	5
Number of Disinfections	15

SCHOOLS.

The sanitary condition of the Schools in your District are quite satisfactory.

In consequence of a complaint regarding the Water supply at Lowbands School, Redmarley, a sample was taken for examination and found to be of good quality.

At the request of the Sanitary Inspector, great improvement has taken place in the disposal of the contents of the Children's conveniences at this School.

FACTORIES AND WORKSHOPS.

Number of such Premises—Factories	15
Workshops	26
Workplaces	—

These premises are found to comply very satisfactorily with the legal requirements of The Factory and Workshops Acts and Public Health Acts.

HOUSING.

General Housing Conditions of the District.

Housing conditions generally tend to become worse owing to much of the existing cottage property being very old. About fifty houses are necessary to meet the existing shortage.

In order to encourage private enterprise, the Council have offered a Subsidy of £75 per house to approved applicants. Up to the present, only 7 applications have been received.

OVERCROWDING

Overcrowding exists, but to no alarming extent. Until new houses are available there appears to be no remedy.

FITNESS OF HOUSES,

The general standard of the houses is fairly good. Every effort has been made to render the unfit houses, temporarily at least, fit for habitation.

The following are the defects most commonly found:-

- (a) General delapidations.
- (b) Absence of damp-courses. .
- (c) Defective floors and roofs.
- (d) Absence of Drainage and yard paving.

These defects are often due to the lack of proper management and supervision by Owners, lack of capital in some cases, and more rarely, to neglect and misuse by tenants.

HOUSING STATISTICS for the YEAR 1925.

Number of New Houses erected during the year :-

(a) Total	3
(b) With State assistance under Housing Acts :	
(1) By the Local Authority	—
(2) By private enterprise	1

UNFIT DWELLING HOUSES.

I Inspection—

(1) Total number of dwelling-houses inspected for housing defects (under Housing or Public Health Acts) ...	563
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(9)

Unfit Dwelling Houses—Continued.

[2] Number of dwelling-houses inspected and recorded under the Housing [Inspection of District] Regulations, 1910	...	0
[3] Number of dwelling-houses found to be in a state so dangerous or injurious to health as to be unfit for human habitation		0
[4] Number of dwelling-houses (exclusive of those referred to under the preceding Sub-head) found not to be in all respects reasonably fit for human habitation	...	70

II Remedy of Defects without service of formal Notices—

Number of defective dwelling-houses rendered fit in consequence of informal action by the local Authority or their Officers ...	69
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III. Action under Statutory Powers—

A.—Proceedings under section 28 of the Housing Act, 1919

(1) Number of dwelling-houses in respect of which notices were served requiring repairs	...	1
(2) Number of dwelling-houses which were rendered fit :-		
(a) By Owners ...	...	0
(b) By Local Authority in default of Owners		1

B.—Proceedings under Public Health Acts :-

(1) Number of dwelling-houses in respect of which notices were served requiring defects to be remedied	5
(2) Number of dwelling-houses in which defects were remedied :-	
(a) By Owners ...	5
(b) By Local Authority in default of Owners	0

C. Proceedings under sections 17 and 18 of the Housing, Town Planning etc. Act, 1909,

On account of house shortage, no Closing Orders or Demolition Orders were applied for or issued.

(10)

INSPECTION AND SUPERVISION OF FOOD.

(a)

MILK SUPPLY

The Area being purely agricultural, large quantities of Milk are produced within, and brought into the District daily. Most of this is treated at Messrs. Cadbury's Milk Condensing Factory at Newent, from whence it is sent on to this Firm's Chocolate Works. Messrs. Cadbury's premises are equipped with modern machinery and the Milk is handled and treated in a thoroughly hygienic manner.

MILK (*Special Designations*) ORDER, 1923.

No premises in the District are licensed for the sale of milk under the above Order.

ADMINISTRATION of *Dairies, Cowsheds and Milkshops* ORDERS.

The condition of the majority of the Cowsheds in your District cannot be said to comply with modern standards as to air-space, lighting, and ventilation, impervious condition of floors and proper drainage. These are matters to which serious attention should be given, as, while milk is a most valuable food, it is most easily affected by conditions prejudicial to public health.

(b)

MEAT INSPECTION.

Every effort is made to inspect all meat slaughtered in the District,—by no means an easy task when the scattered nature of Area is taken into consideration. Regular and systematic visits are paid to all slaughter-houses during regular slaughtering days. These places are kept very satisfactorily and the licencees have strictly observed all Statutory requirements.

No system of meat marking has yet been adopted.

Meat Inspection—Continued.

No case of diseased meat being actually offered for sale has come to the notice of the Inspector. Small seizures have taken place from time to time, and in each case the diseased meat has been destroyed with the owner's consent.

Advertisements as to the obligation to give notice of intention to slaughter under the Public Health (Meat) Regulations, 1924, were inserted in local newspapers, and, on the whole, had the desired effect. A few cases of failure to comply with Articles 8 and 9 were discovered. These were mainly due to ignorance and the offenders were let off with a caution.

In the case of cottagers who occasionally slaughter a pig chiefly for their own consumption and who only sell small quantities to neighbours and friends, it was found impossible to be present at the time of slaughter in every instance. Where the Inspector fails to put in an appearance, the fact tends to the assumption that notice of slaughter will not be essential on a future occasion. In such cases the co-operation of butchers who refuse to slaughter until satisfied that the necessary notice has been given is of great assistance in the successful administration of the Regulations. 64 visits were made to private premises during November and December alone.

The number of Slaughter Houses in use in the District at the dates mentioned are as follows :-

In 1920.	In January 1925.	In December 1925.
5.	5 (licensed).	5 (licensed).

(c) SANITARY CONDITION OF PREMISES WHERE FOODS ARE MANUFACTURED.

No Foods are manufactured locally with the exception of sausages, etc., made by the local butchers, and the conditions under which these are made give rise to no cause for complaint.

CONDITION OF BAKEHOUSES.

In all there are 10 Bakehouses, all of which have been visited and found satisfactory.

PREVALENCE OF AND CONTROL OVER INFECTIOUS DISEASES.

INFECTIOUS DISEASES GENERALLY.

Of the graver forms of infectious disease the District has been fairly free.

During the year the following have been notified :-

DISEASE	Total Cases Notified		Cases admitted to Hospital		Total Deaths.	
	Glos. Porton	Worcs portion	Glos. portion	Worcs. portion	Glos. portion	Worcs. portion
Small Pox ...	—	—	—	—	—	—
Scarlet Fever ...	.. 4	2	4	2	—	—
Diphtheria ...	.. 2	—	2	—	—	—
Enteric Fever (including Paratyphoid) .	—	—	—	—	—	—
Puerperal Fever ...	.	1	—	—	—	—
Pneumonia ...	..	—	—	—	—	—
Erysipelas ...	.	1	—	—	—	—
Ophthalmia Neonatorum ...	.. 1	—	—	—	—	—

SUPPLY AND USE OF DIPHTHERIA ANTI-TOXIN.

A supply is always available and promptly administered where indicated.

DISEASES NOTIFIABLE under Regulations, Jan. 1919.

No cases of encephalitis lethargica, malaria, dysentery, or trench fever were reported during the year.

BACTERIOLOGICAL AIDS TO DIAGNOSIS.

These are frequently resorted to when necessary ; swabs, sputum, pathological specimens, etc., being sent to Bristol.

Prevalence of and Control over Infectious Diseases - Continued.

ACTION TO DISCOVER CONTACTS.

The practice is to obtain Swabs from all contacts, and be guided by the bacteriological report.

“ RETURN CASES ” AND “ CARRIERS.”

Return cases are rare. Proved carriers in the case of Diphtheria are isolated until a second clean swab is obtained.

P.H. (Small Pox Prevention) REGULATIONS, 1917.

No cases have been reported during the year, nor has it been necessary for the Medical Officer of Health to perform primary vaccination or re-vaccination under the Regulations.

NON-NOTIFIABLE ACUTE INFECTIOUS DISEASES.

During the year 200 cases of measles have been reported. With the exception of these cases the District has been remarkably free from acute infectious disease.

INFLUENZA.

Mortality :- During the year only 2 deaths were reported as due to influenza, giving a mortality of 0.26 per thousand.

TUBERCULOSIS.

New cases and mortality during 1925.

Age Periods	New Cases				Deaths			
	Pulmonary		Non-Pulmonary		Pulmonary		Non-Pulmonary	
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
0								
1								
5								
10								
15								
20	1							
25	1	1					1	
35		1					2	
45	1	1						
55	1	1					2	
65 & upwards							1	
	4	4					6	

(14)

The requirements as to notification are well observed by Medical Practitioners and no cause for action has arisen during the year.

The co-operation of Dr. Dickson the County Tuberculosis Medical Officer has been of great assistance, and his services have been largely availed of

No action was taken under the P.H (Prevention of Tuberculosis) Regulations 1925 ; neither was any application made by the Council for an order for compulsory removal to hospital under section 62 of the P.H. Act, 1925.

The work of your District has suffered from the frequent change of Sanitary Inspector during the past few years. It is very difficult to have a continuous policy carried out, It takes an Inspector some time to find out the best methods and I would suggest as far as possible that your district should try to retain the services of the Sanitary Inspector for a longer period than in the past.

Mr. Francis has done his work in a most satisfactory manner since his appointment.

I remain,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Your obedient Servant,

W. M. LUCAS JOHNSTONE, M.B.

Medical Officer of Health.

